

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1.-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A chemically modified double stranded nucleic acid molecule, wherein:

- a. the double stranded nucleic acid comprises a first strand and a second strand;
- b. the first strand comprises a sense region and the second strand comprises an antisense region;
- c. each strand is about 18 to about 27 nucleotides in length, about 18 to about 23 nucleotides of each strand are complementary to each other, and at least 18 nucleotides of the second strand are complementary to a target RNA sequence; and
- d. the first strand includes a terminal cap moiety at its 5'- and 3'-ends, and the second strand optionally includes a terminal cap moiety at its 3'-end, wherein said 3'-end terminal cap moieties are independently selected from the group consisting of 4',5'-methylene nucleotide; 1-(beta-D-erythrofuransyl) nucleotide, 1,5-anhydrohexitol nucleotide; L-nucleotides; *threo*-pentofuransyl nucleotide; acyclic 3',4'-seco nucleotide; acyclic 3,4-dihydroxybutyl nucleotide; acyclic 3,5-dihydroxypentyl nucleotide, 3'-3'-inverted nucleotide moiety; 3'-3'-inverted abasic moiety; 3'-2'-inverted nucleotide moiety; 3'-2'-inverted abasic moiety; and said 5'-end cap moiety is selected from the group consisting of 4',5'-methylene nucleotide; 1-(beta-D-erythrofuransyl) nucleotide; 1,5-anhydrohexitol nucleotide; L-nucleotide; LNA; *threo*-pentofuransyl nucleotide; acyclic 3',4'-seco nucleotide; 3,4-dihydroxybutyl nucleotide; 3,5-dihydroxypentyl nucleotide, 5'-5'-inverted nucleotide moiety; and 5'-5'-inverted abasic moiety.

19. (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein

said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises no ribonucleotides.

20. (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises one or more ribonucleotides.

21. – 32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the first strand are 2'-O-methyl pyrimidine nucleotides.

34. (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in the first strand are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.

35. (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the first strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

36. (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in said second strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides

37. (Previously Presented) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in said second strand are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.

38. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising the double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.